

THE WHOLE MACHINERY OF SALVATION

NO. 2327

A SERMON
INTENDED FOR READING ON LORD'S-DAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 1893
DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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*“How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?
and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?
and how shall they preach, except they are sent? as it is written,
How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.”
Romans 10:14-15*

PLEASE notice, dear friends, that in the thirteenth verse, we have the way of salvation set before us in the plainest terms—“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” I remember well when I lived on that verse for many months. I longed for salvation. I could not see that there was any way of hope for me. I thought that I must be left out, that I was too sinful, or too hard, or too something or other, so that others might be saved, but I could not be.

But when I read this verse, I did what I ask you to do, I caught at it—it seemed like a life-line thrown to a sinking man. I clung to it and it became a life buoy to me—“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” “Ah,” thought I, “I do call on that blessed name, I will call on that glorious name. If I perish, I will never cease to invoke that sacred name.” An invocation of the name of God, a trusting in God, and a consequent calling upon God and acknowledgment of God—this it is that saves the soul.

But I must get you to notice these words a little more in detail. There is here, first, a *wide word*, a *very wide word*—“*Whosoever* shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. “*Whosoever*.” I have heard that, when a person is making his will, if he wishes to leave all he has to one person, say to his wife, if he just says so, that is the best thing he can do. But he had better not go into details and begin making a list of what he is leaving, because he will probably leave something or other out.

Now, in order to make this will of God very distinct, He does not go into any detail, but He just says, “*Whosoever*.” That means the black man, and the red man, and the brown man, and the yellow man, and the white man. It means the rich man, and the poor man, and the man who is not a man. It means everybody of every sort and those who are of no sort at all—or of all sorts put together.

“*Whosoever*.” That includes me, I am sure. But I am equally certain that it includes you, you in the aisles who were never here before, you who are quite unknown in London, you who are a stranger and a foreigner—whoever you may be. It is much better to have it put so, without going into detail, because otherwise somebody might be left out.

I have often thought that if I had read in Scripture that, “If Charles Haddon Spurgeon shall call upon the name of the Lord, he shall be saved,” I should not have felt half as sure of salvation as I do now, because I would have concluded that there might have been somebody else of that name, and very likely there is, and I should have said, “Surely it did not mean me.”

But when the Lord says, “*Whosoever*,” I cannot get out of that circle. It is a big net that seems to entangle all men in its meshes. “*Whosoever*.” If I call upon the name of the Lord, if you call upon the name of the Lord, if the man who lies upstairs a-dying calls upon the name of the Lord, we shall be saved. What a wide word that “*whosoever*” is!

And then, next, *what an easy word* we have here! “Whosoever shall *call* upon the name of the Lord.” Anybody can call upon the name of the Lord. Everybody understands what it is to call—“Hi, there!” Have you not often used such a call as that? And if you have been in distress or danger, have you never called, “Help, help, help”?

Very well, he who can thus call, let him call upon God, invoke His help, clamor for His mercy, crave His pity. If he does that in a believing way, as we shall have to show you, trusting that God will hear him, he shall be saved. So there is no difficulty here that wants a doctor of divinity to explain—the truth is put mainly in monosyllabic words—“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.” It is as plain as a pikestaff. Oh, that you might see it and begin to call upon the name of the Lord by earnest prayer!

But here is another word, *a sure word*—“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord *shall* be saved.” There is no “if” here. No “maybe” here. But a glorious “shall.” Our shalls and wills are poor, puny things, but God’s “shall” is firm as the eternal mountains. “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” as surely as there is a God.

The Lord has made no mistake—He will not revoke his declaration by changing His mind—“Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord *shall be saved*.” Oh, that many would call upon His name tonight and find immediate salvation which will last them throughout life and throughout eternity, for “shall be saved,” reaches a very long way—even throughout the eternal ages that are yet to come.

Now here, you see, friends, we have a wonderful remedy for the disease of sin, very simple and very abundant. But the difficulty is to get it to the people who need it. I am going to talk about that matter in very plain language, because I want to be very practical—and I pray that God’s Spirit may make my whole discourse to be so.

In our text there are four necessities upon which Paul insists. Praying to God, calling upon His name, will save a man. But first, *there is no praying aright without believing*. “How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?” But secondly, *there is no believing without hearing*. “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?” Thirdly, *there is no hearing without a preacher*. “How shall they hear without a preacher?” And fourthly, and lastly, *there is no effective preaching without being sent*. “How shall they preach except they are sent?”

I. First, then, THERE IS NO PRAYING ARIGHT WITHOUT BELIEVING, from which I gather this moral—then let us believe. Since we must pray and only by prayer can find salvation—and there is no praying without believing—may the Lord help us to believe, for how shall we pray aright unless we do believe?

I think that I have persons here tonight who have commenced to pray, who have begun pleading with God. I hope, dear friends, nay, I feel sure of it, that, if that prayer is sincere, there is a measure of faith in it, for would you ask God to save you if you did not believe that *you needed to be saved*? There is a measure of faith in that. Would you ask God to save you if you did not think that *there is a way of salvation by which He can save you*? There is a measure of faith in believing that.

I think that you believe that *there is a Savior*. There is a measure of faith in that and I hope, a measure of saving faith, too, in your believing that, notwithstanding all your sins and sinfulness, there is a Savior provided, who is able to save to the uttermost them that come unto God by Him. You may not have much faith, but you must have some faith if you are really praying to God from your heart and entreating Him to save you.

I think, too, that you must have a little faith that *the Savior will save you*. You have been praying to Him to do it. Would you have expressed that desire and have come to Him in prayer about it unless there was some kind of sediment of faith in your heart? I want to put it very gently to you, yet very plainly. Remember, faith is not measured by the quantity, but by the quality. A man of strong faith is happier, but he is not more truly saved than a man of weak faith, so long as he has any faith at all.

If yours is only feeble faith, the Lord will say to you, “Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.” The faith that comes behind Christ and touches the hem of His garment is a saving faith. And I think that is

what you are doing when you say, “Lord Jesus, save me.” If this is a real prayer and not a sham one, if it comes from your heart, there is, at any rate, a tint, a shade, if not an actual color of faith upon your soul already.

How could you call on Him in whom you have not believed? Would we call for help from a person who we did not think would help us or could help us? No. The mere fact of calling upon anyone for help proves that we have some measure of confidence in that person, that he can and will help us. Well, if you believe as much as that concerning Christ, and if you will cast yourself upon Him, believing that you shall be saved, I would that you had more faith, but even that little faith will bear you into heaven.

You believe also that Christ *can and does hear you*. Ah, you would not have been alone upstairs this afternoon, crying for mercy, if you had thought that there was nobody to hear you! Rational beings do not go and ask of nobody. You believe that Christ is able to hear you and you have some faith that He does hear you, for which I am very thankful indeed.

I think that I may add that *you are measurably trusting to Christ*. Certainly, you are not trusting to anybody else. The fact that you often pray to Him for mercy, for the pardon of sin, for the renewal of your nature, proves that you have some degree, at least—some faint measure of faith in Him. Now, let me exhort you, while you keep on praying, to mix more faith with your praying. “With all thine offerings thou shalt offer salt,” and with all your prayings you shall offer faith.

When you ask anything of God, believe, and you shall receive. When you do appeal to His mercy, believe in the mercy. When you are pleading for His help, believe in the help, for there is much power in faith. “According to your faith, be it unto you.”

You all know, surely, what believing is. You say, “I shall go home to pray.” No, no, no. Believe and pray as much as ever you like—and a believing prayer will save you. “Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved,” but “how then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed?”

Faith comes first. Believe, then, before you do anything else. May God, in His great mercy, enable some poor sinner to have done with doings and with feelings—and to trust—just to trust Jesus! There you are, hanging up there in a tree. You are afraid of falling down, so you cling with all your might. Suppose that a strong man comes underneath and says, “Here, drop into my arms. I will catch you, I am able to bear your weight.” If you trust him, you will drop into his arms.

That is what you have to do with Christ tonight—*trust Him* and let go of every other confidence. Just drop into His arms and you shall be saved. Remember, then, this first lesson, that there is no praying aright without believing.

II. Now we go another step and come to the second necessity. THERE IS NO BELIEVING WITHOUT HEARING—“How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?”

The word “heard” is to be understood in a wide sense. Reading is a kind of hearing. It is not merely listening with the ear, but *you must, by some means or other, come to a knowledge of the truth*, and you cannot know what you do not hear, or read, or learn. The truth must come under your notice so that you are of it or else there can be no faith in you concerning it.

I hope that none of you ever believe with the faith of the man who, when he was asked what he believed, said that he believed what the church believed. “Well,” said one, “what does the church believe?” “Oh!” he replied, “the church believes what I believe.” “Well, then, please tell me, what do you and the church believe?” “We both believe the same thing,” answered he. And he could be got no farther.

Now, there is no faith in that at all—it is simple ignorance and nothing more. “How shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard?” Why, to believe a thing is to know the ins and outs of it! To get at it by reading it or hearing it, are only different forms of the same thing. Well, now, if any man here desires faith, what should he do to obtain it? Sit still and say, “I will try to believe”? Certainly not.

Suppose that I were to announce to you tonight that the Czar of all the Russias is dead and you said that you wished to believe it? You could not believe it by an effort of your mind—you would inquire for

evidence of the truth of my statement, or you would wait till you saw the telegrams tomorrow—and so you would learn whether it was true or not. It is not a distinct act of the will alone that brings faith—“Faith cometh by hearing.”

Listen, then. *The oftener you hear the Gospel, the better*—I mean you who have not yet believed it. As you are hearing it, you may come to believe it. It may insensibly, as it were, steal over you. Having heard it, and heard it, and heard it, again and again, you may at last find yourself believing that Jesus suffered on the cross for you. I recommend all seekers after Christ to hear the Word often.

Take another piece of advice. *Hear better*. Hear with both your ears at once. Harken as you would listen if the preacher were telling you how you could make a fortune in ten minutes. How everybody would listen—how everyone would want to have a front seat, so as to make no mistake! How the pencils would go to work to take down the instructions! Hear that way, for there is more at stake than a fortune—even your immortal soul. Heaven and hell hang upon the hearing or not hearing of the Word. Hear often and hear well.

But *so hear as to try to understand it* and if you cannot meet with the preacher who seems to proclaim an all-round Gospel, do what is better, go to the Bible itself. Read this blessed Book through studiously, with such helps as good men can give you. Yes, try and understand the truth and prove it by experience.

Come to this Book and come to the house of prayer with this thought on your mind, “There is a something that I have to believe and I am going to know what it is. I am going to know the top of it and the bottom of it, the head and the front and the heart of it, and at any rate, I will, if I can, know what it is and what are the grounds and reasons for it.” Hearing thus, you will believe it.

There let me leave that point, then. Hear the Gospel, only mind that what you hear is the Gospel. You can hear some very smart sermons and very clever sermons, and as a rule, I may say that the cleverer they are, the worse they are. Where you see so much of the man, you will see very little of his Master. When everything seems yielded up to the turning of the phrases, putting the thing very grandly, and carrying you away with wonderful eloquence, the Gospel itself gets put out of sight. Let the eloquent men have a shop for themselves on a Monday, but let us have the Sabbath-day given up to plain dealing with the souls of men.

We want none of this word-daubing. Men are going to heaven or to hell, and it is time that we came to close grips with them about this all-important matter. God help us so to do! Hear that which is really aimed at your heart and conscience. Hear that which tells of Christ, and heaven, and the way thither. Hearing that, you are on the way to believing it.

III. Thirdly, THERE IS NO HEARING WITHOUT A PREACHER—“and how shall they hear without a preacher?” Therefore, let us preach.

Someone must make the truth known to men. They will not find out about the Savior unless they are told of Him. The Gospel will not be revealed to men by any supernatural agency—we must go with it. They cannot learn it without being taught it. No man will know the Gospel unless somebody shall tell it to Him, by word of mouth, or by the gift of a book or a tract, or by a letter, or by the open preaching of the Word. Somebody must make it known to the man, for how can he believe in him of whom he has not heard, and how can he hear without a preacher?

Who ought to preach, then? *Everyone who can preach should do so.* The gift of preaching is the responsibility for preaching. I often wonder at some Christian men who can fire away so grandly on the platform, but who never speak for Christ—they will have to account for those prostituted tongues. If a man can speak upon the temperance question, he can speak upon the salvation question—let him take care that he does so.

I do not wish him to be silent on the one, but I do earnestly entreat him not to be silent on the other. There are a great many persons who ought to preach the Gospel, but who do not. Every man who knows the Gospel ought to make it known. “Let him that heareth say, Come.” When you hear the Gospel, tell it

to somebody else—you Christian people are all bound, in proportion to your gifts and your opportunity—to make the Gospel known.

“Why!” says one, “I thought that work was for priests.” Just so, it is only for priests. But then all believers are priests. By His mighty grace, our Lord Jesus Christ has made us kings and priests unto God. And it is our duty, as well as our privilege, to exercise this blessed priestly function of telling to the sons of men the way whereby they may be saved. Each man, then, in this place, who knows Christ, and each woman and each young person, too, are bound to tell of Christ in some way or other to all who are round about them.

For this work, *a high degree of gifts is not required*. It does not say, “How shall they hear without a doctor of divinity?” It does not say, “How shall they hear without a popular preacher?” Oh, dear! some of us would have been lost if we could not have been saved without hearing a man of great abilities. I thank God that I owe my conversion to Christ to an unknown person, who certainly was no minister in the ordinary acceptation of the term, but who could say this much—“Look unto Christ, and be saved, all ye ends of the earth.”

I learned my theology, from which I have never swerved, from an old woman who was a cook in the house where I was an usher. She could talk about the deep things of God, and as I sat and heard what she had to say, as an aged Christian, of what the Lord had done for her, I learned more from her instruction than from anybody I have ever met with since. It does not require a college training to enable you to tell about Christ—some of the best workers in this church have little enough of education, but they bring many to Christ. Go on, my dear brothers and sisters, telling of Christ’s love to you, even if you have very few gifts.

Remember that *when you have told out the story of the cross to men, you are rid of one responsibility*. At any rate, if they perish, it will not be because they did not know. And if they perish through ignorance, it will not be that their ignorance was through your neglect in teaching them. Now, tonight, I wish that I could stir up everyone here to become a preacher, women and all—not that I care much for women preaching, but I want them to preach in the sense in which I have laid the matter down—that is, to make known to somebody the wondrous story of the cross.

Speak to an individual, if you can. If you cannot do that, write. If you cannot write, send a sermon, or give a tract. Only keep on making Christ known. I suppose that there are two or three thousand believers here tonight out of these six thousand people. If every one of you Christians would every day make Christ known to somebody, what a missionary organization we should be!

How can they hear without a preacher? Now, let every one of you become, in the sense in which the text means it, a preacher, by telling out, in some form or other, and making known in some way or other, the wondrous doctrine of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ.

It is pitiable that anybody should live and die without knowing the Gospel. You can have no idea, unless you go into the houses in many of our streets, what absolute ignorance there is in this city of London about the simple elements of the Gospel of Christ. City missionaries have often told me stories that have amazed and appalled me. You think, because so many come to some of our houses of prayer, that the people of London go into the house of God. There is at least a million people, and perhaps, two million, who never attend any place of worship at all. There could be three millions, I suppose, out of our five millions, who only occasionally go to any place of worship at all. Why speak of “heathendom?” We have it at our doors.

The more earnest a man is to win souls, the more he is shocked, amazed, and appalled by the necessity there is to keep on making known the Gospel of Christ. And now they are starting new theologies, inventing falsehoods. Up with you, men and Christians! Publish Christ again. The only way to put this false fire out is with the old fire of the Gospel—men fear that fire.

Put down the new heresy with the old orthodoxy. Bring out Christ crucified. Cry again, with Luther’s earnestness, “Believe and live!” Cry again, with Calvinistic determination, “Salvation is all of grace, of grace alone, through faith in Jesus Christ.” I would to God that we might all preach thus. If we

had but all our church members resolved to testify the Gospel of the grace of God, then should we see men hearing. Then should we find men believing. And men believing are men saved.

IV. So I come to the fourth necessity, with which I shall close. THERE IS NO EFFECTIVE PREACHING WITHOUT BEING SENT—"and how shall they preach, except they be sent?"

"Ah!" says one, "now we have you in a corner. We must not all go and preach, if we are not sent." If *you* are not sent, do not go.

But what does it mean, "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" A man who goes to tell others about Christ must feel that he is sent to do it, or he will never do it properly and effectively.

The man who is sent, first of all, *has a message given to him*. You do not say to your servant, "You go north, south, east, west, and that is all." No, if you send him, you give him a message—"Go and say to Mr. So-and-so, this and that." Or you write it down and you say, "Deliver this letter to such a person." You do not leave him to go and say whatever he likes—"John, I want you to call on Mr. So-and-so, tomorrow morning, and to say whatever first comes into your head." You do not act like that, do you?

Yet that is the notion some people have, nowadays, of what a preacher is—he is a man who makes his message up as he goes along. He is a "thinker." He excogitates the Gospel out of his own brains. I have heard of a German who is said to have constructed a camel out of his own consciousness. Very likely. But I am sure that nobody will construct the Gospel that way.

He must receive it by the revelation of God. The other plan is not Paul's notion, for he asks, "How shall they preach, except they be sent?" First, then, get your message. Be determined to know nothing among men but what the Lord Himself has revealed to you in His Word, by the teaching of His Spirit. Get it well into you. Say to yourself, "What I am going to say is nothing of my own, else it would fall flat and powerless. But I am going with, 'Thus saith the Lord.' This is God's message."

Then, if you are sent, you will preach and you will so preach that men will hear—and they will so hear that they will believe. And they will so believe that they will be saved. But you must go as a God-sent man, having received your message from the mouth of your Master.

Next, I think that, even if we get a message from God, we want something more than that—*there must be an impulse felt within* that shall compel us to speak of Christ. If you merely go and flippantly talk about Jesus Christ to people, you may as well talk about anything else. But if you pity them, if you love them, if you feel that they must not be lost, that you cannot bear the thought of it—if it is in your mind, so that you cannot sleep while you are thinking of such a one because he is going down to perdition—if it gets such a burden that it oppresses you, and weighs you down so that you must speak to somebody about his soul, ah, then you will speak, for you will feel that you are sent!

Now, my impression is that if we are in a right state of heart, we shall always feel like that. If a Christian man were in a right condition of heart, whether he found himself on a train, or along a country road, or at the railway station, or in the police court, or waiting in the lobby of a house, or anywhere, he would begin at once to deal with the person with whom he came into contact, about his soul.

I wish that it were your habit to be always looking out for souls. Up, then, you Christian men, and seek as God shall help you, by every means in your power, to make known Christ to the dying all around you! But you will not do it unless you are sent, driven, impelled, forced—you will not win souls for Christ till the Gospel is like a fire in your bones and you feel that woe is unto you if you do not preach it.

Well now, before you go to try to do that, there is one thing more. You cannot do it effectively unless you are sent—and to be sent means to have *power given you with which to do the work*. Can that power be had? If you feel impelled to cry to God to give you the power to preach, the spiritual power, the power of the Holy Ghost, if you are impelled to teach in the Sunday school—and it is not worth doing unless you feel that you are impelled to it and sent to it—then pray for the power to win the souls of those dear children for Christ.

If you feel called upon to write a letter to a friend tomorrow about his soul or her soul, do it because you feel called to do it—but pray to God to show you how to do it. Pray to Him to put the power into the

words that you utter, that you may say the right words and put even the right tone into those words. There is a good deal, even, in the tone of the preacher.

“How shall they preach, except they be sent?” They must be clothed with divine power. But the Lord can clothe even a child with that power—He has often done it. He can clothe a humble Christian woman, who never spoke in public, with the power to win souls. He has often done it.

And you, brother, who have been quite satisfied to be a church member and to do nothing for Christ—a most unsatisfactory state of things indeed—should begin to be doing something for Him who has done so much for you. First tarry at Jerusalem till you are endued with power from on high and then go forth as Christ’s witnesses—for how shall you preach, except you be sent? But the power being obtained, you must go forth and tell out the message that your Lord has given you.

But you have not done it all till you have *given a report to your Master*. If you have been sent, you will go back to your Lord after you have delivered His message and you will tell Him what they have to say about it. Every man who is sent on an errand gives an answer by and by as to the reply of the person to whom he was sent.

I am afraid that some teachers and preachers forget this. We ought to go, like Isaiah, back to the Master and say, “Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” You have tried hard with Mary to bring her to Christ—did you ever tell the Master about Mary? Mother, you have tried hard with your boy to bring him to the Savior—have you ever told Jesus about your boy?

Last Tuesday night, there were a mother and father who had a son about whom they had once been very hopeful, but he had left home and gone away for weeks, though he promised to return. He had gone off and they had not heard a word about him. They came to a company of Christian people, last Tuesday night, broken-hearted. They had done their best to find their son, but they could not find him.

It was to Haddon Hall that they came—and the people of God there prayed for his father and mother. The father himself prayed and broke down with emotion about his lost son. He went home and there was a letter from his son to say that the Savior had found him. He had given up the drink and he hoped to be a comfort to his father and mother all the rest of their days. He was many miles away and knew nothing of his father’s prayer.

Often, when you do not get on with people, go and tell the Lord Jesus Christ about it. Say, “Lord, I have preached to them, I have prayed for them, I have talked to them, I have wept over them, I bear them on my heart as a burden. Their very name seems to burn itself with letters of fire into my soul. Lord, save them! Lord, save them and they will be saved!” That is the way to win souls. If God works, He first of all makes us travail in birth for the souls of others—and then are they born into the kingdom.

The rest of the text is a kind of vision. The prophet sees persons coming down the mountain side. He looks at them and perceives that they are not men of war, else the greaves upon their legs would be terrible to the peaceful inhabitants of the plain. Yet here they come, a great company from the mountain tops, descending into the valleys.

Who are they? As he looks, he says, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!” They are coming bearing the white flag, servants of the great King with whom you have been at war. They bear the banner that speaks of peace with God.

We, to whom the text alludes, who are the preachers of this Gospel of peace, say to you tonight, “Sinner, throw down your weapons of rebellion. Guilty one, fight no longer against God. Come and be at peace with Him. His peace is proclaimed to you through Jesus Christ. He will freely forgive your every transgression and iniquity. He is ready to forget and blot it all out. God invites you to be reconciled to Him, to have done with warring against Him.

“We preach peace to you and if you hear us, we then tell you glad tidings of good things, full pardon for all the past, a change of heart to be given to you to make you a new creature in Christ Jesus—yes, to be given you tonight, before you leave the Tabernacle—help for the future to strive against sin, strength to conquer and tread the dragon beneath your feet, power to become a child of God, to become an heir of

heaven, to be taken under the guardian wing of providence, to be directed by the infinite wisdom of the Holy Spirit.”

These glad tidings of good things are published to all of you, even you that are farthest off from Christ, and hope, and peace. Believe in Jesus. Trust Him. Trust God in human flesh, trust Him who bled to death upon the cross and paid down the ransom for your soul, and trust Him now. He will do all for you that you need to have done for you—and He will save you and bring you to His right hand in glory.

Now I have talked all in vain unless the Lord shall apply the truth to you and you believe it. Do not wait for somebody to believe for you. Trust Christ for yourself. Believe in Jesus even now. Amen.

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

ROMANS 10

Verse 1. *Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved.*

Desire is the mother and the soul of prayer. “My heart’s desire and prayer.” These Israelites had hunted Paul about and sought to kill him. They were his deadly enemies, but the only return he made them was to pray that they might be saved. I hope you will never have a worse wish for your worst foe.

2. *For I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.*

Always see all the good that is to be seen, and when you have to reprove and rebuke, begin by admitting what is good. “They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.”

3. *For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.*

They were very zealous, but it was blind zeal. They were very energetic, but they used their energy in going the wrong way. God has a righteousness and our wisest course is to submit to it. Our righteousness, if we set it up in opposition to God’s way of salvation, will only increase our sin. You can be ruined by your righteousness as surely as by your unrighteousness, if you set it in the place of salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. “They being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God.”

4. *For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.*

If we get Christ by believing, we have the righteousness of the law. All that ever could come to us by the highest and most perfect obedience to the law of God, we get by faith in Christ Jesus.

5. *For Moses describeth the righteousness which is of the law,*

And being the one through whom the law was given, he knew how to describe it. And we may be sure that he made no mistake. This is his description of legal righteousness—

5. *That the man which doeth those things shall live by them.*

That is it—“Do and live.” That is the law and a very just law, too. Leave anything undone or break the command in any respect and you die—that is the law.

6. *But the righteousness which is of faith—*

This is quite another thing. It—

6. *Speaks on this wise,*

And it is Moses who speaks here, as in the previous verse. This is what the righteousness of faith says—

6-9. *Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven? (that is, to bring Christ down from above:) or, Who shall descend into the deep? (that is, to bring up Christ again from the dead.) But what saith it? The word is nigh thee, even in thy mouth, and in thy heart: that is, the word of faith, which we preach; that if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.*

God's way of salvation, then, is, "Believe and live." Believe in Christ—Christ dying, Christ raised from the dead. If you so believe, you are saved. You need not mount to heaven in rapture, nor dive to hell in remorse. As you are, believe and live. This is the way of the righteousness of God.

10. *For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.*

True faith must be accompanied by an open confession. Come forward and outwardly acknowledge what you inwardly believe. Remember those words of the Lord Jesus, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." Here, as there, the confession is put after the faith, as indeed it must be. First, the reality, the thing signified, faith. Afterwards, the outward and visible sign in the confession of that faith.

11. *For the scripture saith, Whosoever believeth on him shall not be ashamed.*

He need never be ashamed of his faith. It will bear him up. It will bear him through. It will bear him up to heaven.

12-13. *For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him. For whoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.*

That is a wonderful sentence. Catch at it. Doubting, troubled spirits, catch at it. Believe it. Practice it and you shall find it true.

14-15. *How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!*

See here the whole machinery of salvation. God provides salvation in Christ Jesus. He sends the preacher to tell of it, men hear, they believe, and salvation is theirs. You have not to make a righteousness, you have to accept the one that is made for you. It is not what you shall do that shall save you—it is what Christ has done. You are to get out of self-confidence into confidence in Him and as soon as you do so, you are saved.

16. *But they have not all obeyed the gospel.*

Oh, no. All who have heard it have not obeyed it! There are many here who have heard it from their childhood and yet they have not obeyed it. Notice the word "obeyed," for the Gospel comes to you with the force of a divine command. If you reject it, you sin against it, for it is your duty to accept it—"but they have not all obeyed the gospel."

16. *For Esaias saith, LORD, who hath believed our report?*

So few were the obedient that he asked where they were.

17-18. *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, Have they not heard?*

Oh, may they hear, indeed!

18-19. *Yes verily, their sound went into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world. But I say, Did not Israel know? First Moses saith, I will provoke you to jealousy by them that are no people, and by a foolish nation I will anger you.*

Has He not done it? Israel is rejected and remains without Christ, while many out of "a foolish nation" of Anglo-Saxons, who were idolaters, have accepted Christ. People who were regarded as dogs by God's chosen nation Israel have come into the house of the Lord, and still Israel refuses to come.

20. *But Esaias is very bold, and saith, I was found of them that sought me not;*

Hear, then, you who have never had any religion, you who seldom go to the house of God. Even you may be saved, for it is written, "I was found of them that sought me not."

20. *I was made manifest unto them that asked not after me.*

Here is the manifestation of sovereign grace—God choosing and saving whom He wills, irrespective of their condition—exercising the sovereignty of His mercy in saving the most undeserving.

21. *But to Israel he saith, All day long I have stretched forth my hands—*

In the attitude of invitation and entreaty, and readiness to receive,—

21. *Unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.*

And that is what He has done to you, O you careless child of pious parents, you unregenerate hearer of the Word! All day long has He stood and stretched forth His hands unto a disobedient and gainsaying people. The Lord forgive all such, for Jesus' sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—485, 540, 503

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.